



Episode 375 – Methods for Practicing on Your Own | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey everyone, welcome. This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 375. Today we're gonna go over some suggestions for getting the most out of training on your own. I'm Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show and I'm the founder at whistlekick and here on martial arts radio, we come to you twice a week all for free giving you great interviews and topic episodes like this one help you get the most out of your traditional martial arts lifestyle. If you want to check out the products we make which is the easiest way for you to help us out and keep the show going, you can head to whistlekick.com and use the code `podcast15` that will get you 15% off. Of course we've got transcripts, video, audio, photos, links, tons of cool stuff to help you get the most out of each of these episodes at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com.

Now it's probably fair to say that all of you out there your training the majority of your training is at some kind of organized martial arts class. It's easy you get to go and spend time with people that you like and get a good workout in and unless you're the instructor, you don't have to worry about deciding what it is you're doing. But at the same time we've heard from so many of the guests on the show that earning a black belt, to becoming your best, however you want to look at it involves training on your own. In fact I personally don't know anyone who's ever earned the rank of black but who didn't spend at least some time training on their own. But training on your own is difficult. It requires a lot more thought as to how you're going to structure that training and there are things you can and cannot do with that training but there are also some advantages to training on your own and those are all things we're going to talk about today.



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When we think about the things that you can and can't do, the stuff you can't do, while it is a large portion of the options that you have training martial arts, they all fall in the three categories really. You can't do work that requires other people, you can't do work that requires more space than you have, and you shouldn't spend your time practicing things that you don't know how to do correctly yet. Sometimes you can use a cell phone to catch some video and watch yourself but if it's a brand-new skill or a brand-new form and you're still trying to figure it out, practicing on your own may not be and in many cases is not the best way to spend your time because you will be spending that time cementing habits that are wrong and that's the opposite of what we want to do isn't it? So let's be positive, what can you do? Well, the number one thing you can do by training on your own is work out for shorter periods of time and do so more frequently. I've kicked around this idea on the show quite a few times that you know, just a couple minutes a day, if you're focused, you can get a lot done. And by doing that, day after day, you can actually progress quite a bit. A minute a day, that's 365 minutes a year that's an extra six hours that's like adding for the way most people train another 2 to 3 weeks of training. Pretty good stuff. I think the best way to use that time is to practice the things that you know your bad at. The things that you most need to improve because by improving those things everything gets better. As I already mentioned you can use a cell phone or other way of capturing video to critique yourself and actually find this interesting that more people don't do this because I don't think there's a better tool out there than a cell phone so you can video yourself and then watch it immediately after. The ability to see how your practice translates into the way comes through, you know if you're practicing a form I'm gonna try working on this part of this movement what is that look like as you watch the form. It's immediate, you get that immediate feedback and because you're the one trying to make the change, you're the one identifying the issue, you can better correlate feeling to outcome which is one of the greatest challenges the people have in martial arts, not knowing how their efforts, the way things feel, actually look. Of course, you can work on physical abilities, you can work on conditioning or developing speed, power, accuracy. Any of those things with any of your techniques. One of my favorite things to do is to put a small piece of tape on a doorframe and kick it to practice my various kicks coming very close or even just barely touching that wooden door frame. I gotta have control and if I don't it's going to hurt. So that forces me to stay in control and that accuracy serves me well when I step back in the class especially with partner drills and being able to just barely grace someone's nose and make their eyes get really big. It's fun. I think one of the most underrated things to work on at home is developing combinations for whatever your version of combat, your version of sparring is. To take 2-3-4 movements and string them together in a way that makes sense for you in the way that you spar or whatever verb you use in their fight etc. And to continue to work that combination until it's its part of you. You know, that's not something that happens in five or 10 repetitions which is why the basics that we do in most martial arts classes that's why the often takes so long to instill in a new student because 10-50 or even 100 repetitions of something new, it's hard to call on that in a time of stress which sparring is. But if you develop a combination see you take a three technique combination, and you work on it 20 times a day, well, within a month you haven't spent a whole lot of time but because you've done it every day. The next time you spar, your body can be ready to pull that out at a moments notice. And then once you've built that into yourself it's part of your martial arts DNA, then you can work on using in different ways, different power, speed, using it to target certain things, using that doorframe, maybe you've got to tape



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on that door frame again. And you don't necessarily need a lot of space and if you don't have a lot of space you can adapt the techniques you have to the space that you have.

Footwork is one of those things that I hear instructors constantly talking to students about that students don't seem to get better at it and part of that is because we rarely work on foot work alone in martial arts classes. We tend work on footwork along with techniques and people are obviously going to prioritize those techniques because that's what were usually taught to prioritize. But to take that footwork back home to work on it on your own, to think about not just your stances and how to move from stance to stance, but when different stances are appropriate to recognize the difference between a stance you would use in sparring and a stance you might using your forms. To practice moving in all the different directions that you might have. I've even seen people put down tape at home drawing out not just for directions but eight so you've got forward back left and right but also the diagonals and to practice moving in those directions fast, efficiently with all of your stances and as you get better with that throwing techniques as you do so. Of course we all know breathing is important, its critical, without breathing we die. So practicing your breathing whether that's breathing when you are under stress or meditative breathing, all are good to work on and none of them require much space. Kind of an extension of breathing whether you call it a ki-ai or a ki up, or a yell or anything else. This is something that most students are really embarrassed to work on in front of other people. And that leads to a lot of people having substandard i'm gonna call them Kiais is that the more the most generic term that I'm aware of, that people refer to it as. So I don't mean any offense to you if you called it something else. But I see people work on their kiais in classes and they want to get loud, they're nervous. Well guess what? Most of us get some time alone at home even if we live with other people. Practice those kiais, practice them when no one's around I get better at them. Here's a bonus, if you can stare yourself down in the mirror while you kiai, loudly, you can kiai anywhere. And for those of us that practice grappling, rolls, were used to having mats, but starting to get used to what a hard floor feels like underneath you, can really have some advantages especially in the context of self-defense. So, whether that's a linoleum floor or tile floor, may be of a thick carpeted floor that you can start with, maybe you're not doing big break falls on it but just to lay on your back, to roll around, to feel what that feels like. To start making some of the motions that you have as you start to get up, or some of the leg manipulations. All of these things have relevance as you come back in. I dont know about you but if you've been training for a while, especially if you've trained in multiple systems, you know quite a few forms and it can be easy to forget some of them. Unfortunately I have forgotten more forms than i've ever learned and as someone who really enjoys them, that really bums me out.

No one of the things I try to do is work on a form or two a day. I just go through once or twice, I'm not trying to make it better just trying to remember it. So that when I get in the class or when I have the opportunity to spend more time, I don't have to spend 5-10-20 minutes remembering it, going to youtube, finding inappropriate video that's pretty darn close to the one that we learned in class etc. For most people, it takes about a minute to do a form. So again there's a minute a day, there's what you can do. And we talk about martial arts, we talk about it as being this tool for personal development but we don't talk about the mental stuff the spiritual stuff too often on this show. But when you practice on your own, there's no reason that you can't be reading or watching videos listening to martial arts radio,



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writing things down. The more senses, the more you are incorporating your brain into your training the more you're going to get from it, the better the martial artist you will become. There are a ton of great books, great youtube channels out there, just by being around great martial artist even if that's virtually, you will start to pick things up. Why do you think I do this show? I get to be around great martial arts I learned from them, just by talking to them I learned things and hopefully you do too. Now there are a couple past episodes that you might be interested in we will link them@theshownoteswhistlekickmartialartsradio.com. The first one we did an episode on things you could practice in the car, things relevant to martial arts that you could get better at while driving. And then the second one, are drills for practicing your forms whether you call them kata or tol or poomsae, or hyung or patterns or routines, those are all the words I know. If there is another word for forms that I don't know I would love to add it to that list, so let me know.

So that's what I got. I would love to hear from a bunch of you. How do you work on your forms? And the best place the thing that would make me the happiest is if you could leave a comment at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com under this episode 375, so other people can learn from what you are doing. Now that something that you don't want to share publicly, that's fine. You can email me jeremy@whistlekick.com. I'd love for you to follow us on social media, we are @whistlekick on Twitter, youtube, Facebook, and Instagram. We're also rolling around there on Pinterest and Tumblr and a bunch of other places. Don't forget you can use the code `podcast15` to save 15% at whistlekick.com. We've rolled out a few new products recently so, if you have been over the recently check it out. And of course there are other ways you can help us out, you can share this or another episode with a martial artist that you know. You can leave us review on itunes or somewhere else or you can head on over to Amazon and while we don't have a code for you there we do have a number of our products there for your purchase. I appreciate your time today, thanks for listening and thank you for your support. Until the next episode, train hard smile and have a great day.